

The Builder.

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THE new front to Buckingham Palace is being proceeded with rapidly under the direction of Mr. E. Blore. In our present number we give a view of the palace as it will appear when completed, seen from the south-east, together with the elevation of the centre part of it on a larger scale, to afford a clearer idea of the details than can be conveyed by the general view.*

Our readers will remember the architect's amusing report of the distressing position of our illustrious Queen and accomplished consort,—made in this same month of August, last year,—their domestic discomforts and miserable home. The hammering of cabinet-makers, the smell of the glue-pot, risk of fire, and want of room for the young princes to stand upright in their apartments, were only a few of the inconveniences to which the royal family were exposed in Buckingham Palace as it then stood. So melancholy a picture so touchingly set forth, deprived the House of Commons of thought for any thing but immediate improvement, and, with tears in their eyes, they at once voted 20,000*l.*, in part of the sum of 150,000*l.*, for the enlargement of Buckingham Palace, and, as we believe, were sorry for it directly afterwards.

The proposed works included a new east front to the palace; clearing out and rearranging rooms in the south wing; new kitchens with a large ball-room; decorations and painting; taking down the marble arch, and altering the drainage.

We strenuously upposed the expenditure of more money on this unsatisfactory building as a royal palace, being satisfied that it could not be made fit for the purpose and worthy of the nation, and we were fully borne out in this opinion by concurrent testimony from all quarters. Our suggestion that it should be appropriated as the National Gallery and Palace of Art, and a new palace built elsewhere, for the Queen, was received with general favour and republished in numerous journals. However, the Government would not alter their views, and the works, as we have said, are now making rapid progress.

The building, it will be remembered, occupied three sides of a square $\square$. The double portico which terminated the east end of each wing was taken down, and the addition is being built against these wings, extending north and south, so as to form the fourth side of the square $\square$ and inclose the court. The new structure projects but very slightly beyond the face of the old building on either side, and occupies in the whole about 345 feet. Its depth from east to west is about 73 feet, which brings it up to within a few feet of the marble arch, and the height to the top of the balustrade will be about 77 feet. The extreme height in the centre, exclusive of the decorative arms, will be about 90 feet. One central and two side archways give entrance to the new building and to the court. There are twenty-three windows in each of the two upper stories. The mezzanine is lighted by panels over the windows of the ground floor, and the top story by openings in the frieze of the entablature.

The whole is crowned by a balustrade, and the dies which form it into panels will each carry a vase or urn as at the Privy Council Office, Whitehall. The quoins of the building which at first were to have had pilasters, are rusticated.

It will be seen that the design does not pretend to grandeur or magnificence, scarcely to dignity; and although all will probably agree with us in thinking that these are the characteristics to be looked for in the palace of the sovereign, the architect was probably right in attempting, in the present instance, little more than an ordinary piece of street architecture in stone instead of stucco.

We have heard a rumour of a gallery of art, in Buckingham Palace, to be opened to the nation at certain times: what truth may be in it we will not venture to say, but that it may be found wholly so is our earnest wish, feeling satisfied that every enjoyment of this kind afforded to the public has a greatly salutary and lasting effect.

Our hope was, that Buckingham Palace might have become a palace of art for the people. Besides affording space for a collection of works of art worthy to be called national, and capable of great extension, accommodation could have been afforded to various societies connected with the arts and sciences, whose efforts are for the most part crippled by the rent they now have to pay. In respect of the national collection, at all events, something *must* be done. The enlargement of the present gallery, which has been commenced, or is about to be commenced, can be but temporary, unless indeed the interests of the nation be disregarded and valuable donations continue to be refused. Room for a gallery of casts, too, accessible to all, is much to be desired, and would prove of the greatest service to the arts; the want of it in the metropolis, scarcely to be believed, is greatly felt and deplored. The museum of architecture, also, often dwelt on by us, and for which the trustees of the British Museum say they have not space, might then be hoped for; indeed, the urgent necessity for accommodation in respect of artistic progress and the general advancement of the people, is evident on all sides. The building, either in the park, as once suggested by Sir Robert Peel, or elsewhere, must come, sooner or later, and the sooner the better; say we right earnestly.

Our view shews part of Mr. Blore's suggestions for laying out the ground in front of the palace, which, if we understand it rightly, involves lengthening the present piece of water in the enclosure, to bring it nearer the palace. As the ground slopes away from the palace towards the east, he proposes, as may be seen, to lower the surface of it at a certain distance from the front of the palace, so as to form a terrace, faced with stone, as in Trafalgar-square.*

MIDDLE-ROW, HOLBORN.—We are distressed to find that the foundations are being put in for rebuilding one of the houses in Middle-row. Can nothing be done to prevent the perpetuation of this great obstruction in such an important thoroughfare as Holborn?

* The probable site of the marble arch still occupies the attention of several of our correspondents. One of the most recent says:—“Will you allow me, through the medium of your useful publication, to inquire what is intended to be done with the arch in front of Buckingham Palace? As it is a handsome and costly structure, does it not seem a pity to let it away with all manner? My idea is, that if it were transferred to the entrance of the garden, next to the vestibule-hall, and another arch, to correspond, were erected on the opposite or French wing, it very handsome addition would be made to the entire facade of the palace. Part of the road required to be taken into the enclosure on that side to afford greater privacy, and the arch would form a good entrance, the same as on the other side. The arches might be adorned with the one with rural and the other with military trophies.” We do not care much what may be done with the arch, but should protest violently against the further waste of money on a material so entirely unsuited to the London atmosphere of Holborn, if there was any fear of a duplication.

ARCHITECTURAL SCAMPER IN NORFOLK.

THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.*

ONE of the pleasantest of the week of pleasant days spent with the Institute, was that wherein the whole party made an architectural pilgrimage to Little and Great Snoring churches, Binham Abbey, Old and New Walsingham churches, Walsingham Abbey, Barningham Hall, and Fakenham Church. The rail conveyed the party a certain distance, and then a stage-coach, a hearse-like omnibus, and other lively-looking vehicles of various kinds, not forgetting a dog-cart and its good-natured owner (though it did discharge its three occupants once during the journey in a somewhat head-over-heels style), were pressed into the service. Had this accident, by the way, been as serious as it might have been, the dean and chapter must have sought another architect, there could be no second volume of “New-leaf Discourses,” and these notes would not have been written. But let that pass;—we have reached *Little Snoring Church*, a curious structure, with a detached round tower close to the west end of it (on the south side), which has evidently belonged to a former church. The tower has been called Saxon, but shews nothing to justify the statement. The existing church belongs to the transition period, between Norman and early English: the south doorway has a stilted horseshoe arch, over a pointed one ornamented with zig-zags, and under this latter comes the round arch of the door, with shafts in the jambs. The east end of the church had three lancet-headed (early English) windows, one of which has been destroyed by rebuilding the north wall of the chancel. On the south side of the chancel is a piscina in the jamb of the window, across the angle of the sill, as at Cheltenham. There is a similar piscina in Fakenham Church, which we visited afterwards.

Great Snoring Church has a very good perpendicular tower; and, inside, the rood-screen remains. The old open wood roof was removed forty or fifty years ago.

The Rectory-house, close by, is a curious example of the moulded brickwork of the time of Henry VIII., including heads, shields, and other decorations. Jesu M., in Tudor characters, is repeated numerous times in a string course: the repetition gives regularity as a decoration.

The remains of *Binham Abbey Church*, the next place visited, are particularly interesting, especially the west end, which is a charming example of early English work. It was originally a very large cross church, founded at the end of the eleventh century; but only the nave, which is chiefly Norman, is preserved, and even here the aisles have been destroyed, and the spaces between the main arches on either side, which carry the clerestory, are built up. It must have been a noble structure originally. At the east end solid masses of flint concrete, now standing, mark the central tower, transepts, and chancel. Some of these masses are much larger at the top than at the bottom, like inverted pyramids, thanks to man rather than to time, and shew the extreme solidity which construction of this sort requires. Inside the church are a number of old benches, with poppies and open carved backs of varied and elegant design, probably of the perpendicular period.

The sketch books having been duly called into requisition, the pilgrims started for the shrine of “Our Lady of Walsingham,” once even more frequented than the shrine of Thomas à Becket. The “Milky Way” in the heavens was pointed out by the monks as a miraculous indication of the road to this celebrated place, in consequence of which it was even called by some “The Walsingham Way.” The modern *Walsingham Abbey* is the seat of Mr. H. Lee Warner, who received the Institute in admirable style. Some fine remains of the convent are in the pleasure grounds, and incorporated with the mansion: part of the rectory adjoining the house is particularly interesting; steps to the pulpit and the corbel of the latter are to be seen.

Fakenham Church has a fine perpendicular tower of flint and stone, the former beautifully fitted into panels. The stone doorway with niches, sculptured shields, &c. is an excellent piece of work. The sedilia and piscina are